

The PEACE Model of Investigative Interviewing Basic Interviewing Skills

The PEACE model of interviewing is a Tier based training program that takes into consideration the most current research in all aspects of interviewing. These aspects include building rapport, human memory, strategic use of evidence, best practices to extract information from people without contaminating it, properly closing an interview to assist in future interactions and evaluating the information gained as well as the effectiveness of the interviewer.

PEACE was developed in the late 1980's and early 1990's in the United Kingdom, following several, very public cases in which false confessions were obtained. A group of researchers compiled the most current research and made recommendations to a committee of law enforcement representatives. This committee then created the model known as PEACE. The PEACE framework is an ethical, non-accusatorial, and science-based approach to police interviewing. It begins with proper Planning/Preparation prior to the interview, properly Engaging/Explain the process to the person being interviewed, obtaining the most accurate and reliable Account possible, properly Closing the interview, and Evaluating the information obtained, and the interview process itself.

It is designed to be built on a successive group of Tiers, with each Tier building off the previous one. Tier 1 is a 2-day class for Troopers and new Officers, and focuses on the basics of interview practices and human memory. Tier 2 builds on this and is a 2-week course. It contains a more in depth look at human memory and is designed for detectives. This class allows participants to actively conduct practical interviews to put their knowledge to work. Tier 3 is a more advanced training which builds upon the principles of Tier 2. Tiers 4 and 5 are more administrative and allows for the evaluation of all detectives using the model and also to have an adviser to assist in all aspects of the interview process, from overseeing training to assisting with planning interviews in investigations.

In November of 2018, the Vermont State Police decided to transition to this model after researching various models of interviewing. It did so on the basis there was little oversight in general, of the tactic used most by its members, talking to people. There are various trainings available but, there is little control the department had on what was taught, how it was used by its members and, if its members were using the training the way it was taught. This program has allowed the department to have a more active role in the training, and overall application of interviewing by its members. It also allows the department to implement strategies in interviewing that are based on research and science, which lends credibility to the practices used, and lessens the chances of future liability. It also allows the department to become more consistent and professional in interviewing, since all of its members are being taught the same basic methods and procedures to conduct interviews.